What About The Doctors' Plot Now That Beria Is Dead? See Page 2

I. F. Stone's Weekly

VOL. 1, NUMBER 48 JANUARY 2, 1954 WASHINGTON, D. C. 15 CENTS

Outlook for 1954: Precarious, But Peace

The most important event of 1953 was the announcement in August that the Soviet had the H-bomb. The effect was to give the Soviet Union technological equality in war-making with the United States, and to underscore the fact that the two great powers were now so evenly matched with weapons of such transcendent destructiveness as to make co-existence, settlement and peace a mutual necessity.

Ranking next to it, though much farther down in the historic scale, was the return to power of the Republican party in the United States. This brought to ascendancy those spokesmen for the financial community who fear the garrison State as an entering wedge for socialism (see, for example, the leading article in *Barron's* for November 16, "Nose in the Tent—Defense Plans Hide a Lot of Socialism"), who want above all a balanced budget and a return to fiscal conservatism. They realize that this can be achieved only by reduction of the military establishment and relaxation of tension. The Korean truce in July was the first major achievement of these "Wall Streeters"—achieved against the opposition of the military, and the China Lobby, with its McCarthyite puppets.

The combination of Soviet strength and conservative longing for "sound money" has led to some extraordinary developments. In September, on his return from abroad, Adlai Stevenson seemed politically foolhardy when he suggested in an interview with *Newsweek* that we must co-exist with the new China. But two days after Christmas, Drew Pearson reported an interview with former President Hoover in which the latter said we could not go on "forever ignoring Communist China" and expressed the opinion that as business continued to fall off there would be an increased demand for trade with it. Hoover added that he considered Syngman Rhee a "menace"—a remark Hearst's New York *Daily Mirror* dropped from the Pearson column.

As striking are the views unexpectedly expressed in *Collier's* for January 8 by Senator H. Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, another member of the Old Guard, who is president pro tem of the Senate and chairman of its powerful Appropriations Committee. The Bridges article is called "Where Do You Stand on the Gravest Question of Our Time?" Bridges asks, "Should we fence ourselves in with radar and rocket? Or concentrate on the world's mightiest retaliatory force, as a deterrent? Or prepare for all eventualities? If not," he adds, "there's a fourth choice—which nobody likes to mention." It turns out that the fourth choice is co-existence.

The Senator does not commit himself. "I know no one," he writes, "willing to step up and be as forthright politically as some are privately," but a certain "they" believe the U. S. "must acknowledge that when two major powers have hydrogen weapons, recourse to war is out, *whatever the differences.*" Coming from a Senator who in the past has often been allied with the China Lobby, this—guarded though it be—is sensational. How welcome too is the Senator's remark in passing, "The truth of the matter is that many responsible leaders are tired of panic arguments!"

Against this background it is easier to understand the decision to withdraw two divisions from Korea and the "new look" military plans in which the Army and Navy are to be reduced and the air force increased. This is disentanglement, a signal to Communist China that while no solution to the Korean question can be found which will satisfy either side, the status quo may be stabilized and tension relaxed by slow mutual withdrawal from the Peninsula. The sour reactions of Rhee, General Maxwell D. Taylor and David Lawrence are music to the ears of all who desire peace.

In this connection it is useful to call attention to a dispatch published by the *Sunday Times* of London (Dec. 20) from its well-informed Tokyo correspondent, Richard Hughes. Hughes reported that the State Department "with the concurrence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff" (ours is a government of almost independent feudal style principalities) vetoed plans for an alliance between Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee just before the latter's trip to Formosa and "firmly rejected proposals by Chiang and Rhee that the Chinese Nationalist troops be allowed to use South Korean bases for raids on the Chinese mainland."

In this context, is there some hope of agreement between U. S. and U. S. S. R. on control of atomic weapons? At first glance, the "new look" strategy would seem to be in the way—the idea is to save money on manpower by relying on the deterrent fear of atom-armed planes, an attractive solution for an unwarlike people casting about for easy pushbutton methods to establish a *pax americana.* But it is interesting to see that while the *Chicago Tribune* last week hailed the "new look" as an acceptance by Eisenhower of Taft-Hoover defense views, it also suggested in a Christmas Day editorial that "realization on both sides" of how destructive the new bombs are "may lead in the long run to a prohibition of such weapons" and suggesting that the U. S. would regain the advantage of its "impressive industrial superiority" if the possibility of atomic attack were eliminated.

The Russians, after their first angry reaction to Eisenhower's proposals, were shrewd enough to change their tune and tactic. The Eisenhower "atomic pool" plan is a glittering bauble but will serve a useful purpose if it leads to confidential talks. The obstacles to peace are great; its enemies are desperate. Germany seems as insoluble a problem as Korea, given the attitudes of U. S., U. S. S. R. and their respective satellies. But peace does seem to be breaking out. This is the happy tidings for 1954.

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Has the Soviet Secret Police Always Been Run by Traitors?

Some Unanswered Questions in the Beria Case

Yagoda, head of the Soviet secret police in the 30's, the man who staged the great show trials, was himself brought to trial and executed (in March, 1938) as a lifelong agent of foreign intelligence services. Yezhov, his successor, who prepared Yagoda for trial, was later executed on the same charges. He was succeeded in 1939 by Beria and now Beria, too, has been executed as a foreign agent. Thus, if Moscow is to be believed, the successive heads of the Soviet secret police in the last two decades, have been traitors and foreign spies. The question then arises—were the many famous Russians they purged and prosecuted the victims of foreign-directed deviltry?

The premise once accepted, stranger questions follow. The Soviet war effort was managed by a State Defense Committee of five men: Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Beria and Malenkov. Beria was in charge of domestic policy. How did the Soviets manage to survive the war if the director of the home front was a foreign agent?

Is Malenkov Also Tainted?

Were Stalin, Molotov and Malenkov also tainted? It was Stalin, a fellow Georgian, who gave such sweeping power to the Georgian traitor, Beria. Molotov's right hand man in the Foreign Office all through the war was Dekanozov, another of the Georgians executed as a traitor with Beria. And who nominated Malenkov to be head of the Soviet government after Stalin died? That same foreign agent, Beria.

A Swing Back to Repression?

Twice, in 1939 and in 1953, Beria's accession to power as head of the secret police, was followed by events which relaxed the terror. His assignment in 1939 was to "purge the purgers"—five important NKVD officials in the Ukraine were tried and executed for criminal abuse of their powers Many persons were released from jail and rehabilitated on the ground that there had been "a deplorable misunderstanding" —the phrase was standard. Beria made a speech at the Communist party Congress in March, 1939, in which he attacked the tendency to blame failures in the economic sphere on "hostile and disruptive forces" instead of on poor management.

This year, too, Beria's accession to control of the secret police was followed by reforms. On March 27 a decree was issued providing an amnesty for many kinds of prisoners, including all women with children under ten years of age, pregnant women and young persons under 18 (in itself no flattering sidelight on the Soviet penal system). A revision of the criminal code was promised which would abolish criminal responsibility for certain types of malfeasance in farm and factory work and management—a reform which recalls the 1939 speech by Beria.

This was followed on April 3 by the sensational announcement reversing the previous verdict in the "doctors' plot," asserting that the supposed confessions had been obtained by illegal means and declaring that the secret police officials responsible were to be punished. *Pravda* underscored the significance of this by concluding, "Every worker, every collective farmer, every member of the intelligentsia, can work safely and without fear that his civic rights are guarded." Four months later, on July 9, Beria fell from power.

What Happened to Reform of the Criminal Code?

When the amnesty decree was announced on March 27, the Ministry of Justice was "instructed to draft appropriate proposals" for the reform of the criminal code and submit them to the Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet within a month. Nothing more has been heard of the promised reform.

What Now in The Case of The Doctors?

Most of the doctors whom Beria cleared were Jews; the American Joint Distribution Committee, an American Jewish organization, had been accused in January of directing these doctors to poison high officials of the Soviet government. In reversing that decision and punishing those responsible, was Beria acting as a foreign agent? Was the charge he made merely a frame-up of innocent secret police agents?

The Soviet communiques, as usual, cast little light on these real questions. *Pravda* last July in announcing his removal and arrest said "Being obliged to carry out the instructions of the central committee of the CPSU and the Government with respect to strengthening Soviet law and ending certain instances of lawlessness and arbitrary action, Beria deliberately hindered the carrying out of these instructions . . ." Just how he hindered them was not specified.

This sounds as if the reversal of the doctors' plot was carried out on orders. But Pravda on December 17, in announcing that Beria was to be tried for treason under the Kirov law, said he and his fellow "conspirators were persecuting and harassing honest workers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs who refused to carry out the criminal orders of Beria." This begins to sound differently.

Pravda also said on December 17, "Beria had chosen as his main method slander, intrigue and various provocations against honest Party and government workers who stood in the way of his designs . . ." Was the April announcement on the "doctors' plot," then, only "slander" of honest government workers? This question, too, is left unanswered. One tantalizing detail underscores the question. The Marshal Koniev who presided at the Beria trial was one of those whom the doctors were accused of trying to poison!

Reversion to Demonology?

The *Pravda* announcement last July said "irrefutable facts" proved that Beria had "ceased to be a Communist, that he has developed into a bourgeois renegade," and that he was guilty of attempting to substitute "in place of the party's policy worked out over many years, a policy of capitulation which, in the final analysis, would have led to the restoration of Capitalism."

This seems to reflect a bitter dispute over policy. Beria seems to have been associated with a more "liberal" point of view on personal rights and on the rights of national minorities. The phrasing seems the echo of a real debate, not an exercise in demonology.

There is a different tone in the Pravda article of December 17. This no longer speaks of policies which "in the final analysis" would lead to the restoration of capitalism. All is now gross and melodramatic. Beria was a foreign agent from the early 20's and tried to place the Ministry of Internal Affairs "above the Party and the Government, with the objective of restoring capitalism and re-establishing the rule of the bourgeoisie." (Where was Beria going to get the bourgeoisie to restore? From the nearest cemetery?)

A Few "Bourgeois" Reforms Would Help

The Soviet government owes world public opinion an explanation of where the case of the doctors stands now that the man who exposed it as a frame-up and a fraud has been executed.

A government which periodically discovers that the heads of its secret police are monsters is badly in need of "bourgeois style" reforms to protect its citizens.

If these were the kind of reforms Beria was trying to effect, his execution is a setback for the hopes of a more moderate regime in the Soviet Union.

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I. F. Stone's Weekly

• *Editor and Publisher*, I. F. STONE

Published weekly except the last two weeks of August at Room 205, 301 E. Capitol St., S.E., Washington 3, D. C. Subscription rates: Domestic, $5 a year; Canada, Mexico and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere, $6; England and Continental Europe, $10 by 1st class mail, $15 by air; for Israel, Asia, Australia and Africa, $10 by first class mail, $20 by air mail. Single copy, 15 cents. Tel.: LI 4-7087. Entered as Second Class mail matter, Post Office, Washington, D. C.

January 2, 1954 Vol. 1, No. 48

Once Lightly Round

The Three C's—Minus Two of Them. We note the celerity with which the Republican "new look" NLRB intervened to give the racket-ridden ILA the quick waterfront election it wanted in New York. The Republicans were going to clean up "Crime, Corruption and Communism" but not, it appears, when crime and corruption are linked with big business and useful politically. No doubt we shall soon be reading a red hot column on this theme by Westbrook Pegler, our leading crusader against labor corruption, probably tracing the Eisenhower Administration's lapse directly to the dastardly influence of Mrs. Roosevelt.

Good News, If True, Dept: Business Week (Dec. 26) reports from Washington, "Immunity for witnesses who tell of their subversive activities won't be voted. Congress doesn't like deals between government and suspects. Evidence obtained by wire-tapping isn't likely to be O.K.'d either. Many Congressmen are lawyers. They see this as an invasion of liberties."

Revising The King James Version to Fit The Cold War. The Washington Post celebrated Christmas with an editorial learnedly discussing the original Greek text of "peace on earth, good will toward men" and suggesting that it means only good will toward those men who are already ("eudoxias") well-disposed. To keep the text consistent and (up-to-date) we suggest a similar passage be revised to read, "Love thine enemy, but only after he has been vaporized." (And just to make Ike's Attorney General more comfortable at church, why not, "Blessed are the persecutors . . . "?)

Soliciting Insurance, Not Secrets: The real story about Harry Hyman that "balky witness" of McCarthy's who made "400 to 600" telephone calls in the last two years to various defense installations is that he was soliciting life insurance, not secrets. Hyman is one of the country's top insurance agents and is said to have sold about $1,000,000 worth last year alone.

"Jenner Says Soviet Still Has 25 Spy Rings in the U.S." Our own oujia board tells us 23.

The Advance of Piety: Catholic priests have been granted two hours a week to teach the catechism in the public schools of Formosa, according to the Rev. Louis J. Dowd, a Jesuit missionary expelled from China by the Communists in 1951. Father Dowd told the Sodality of Our Lady at Georgetown University the State Department is completely "befuddled" because it does not realize that "communism is not a flesh-and-blood organization . . . the power we are fighting is the devil." Now that we have the enemy spotted, perhaps we ought to extend the Point Four program to hell.

The Oder-Neisse, The Vatican and The Shadow of A New Rapallo: In an interview with Claude Bourdet's *L'Observateur* (Dec. 17), M. Andre Denis, the one Catholic (M.R.P.) member of the French parliamentary delegation which just visited Poland says the Vatican's refusal to nominate Bishops for the new Oder-Neisse territory of Poland provoked an outburst of ill-feeling "among those elements of the regime which had banked on collaboration with the Church." Mr. Denis said all sectors of Polish opinion, at home and abroad, are agreed on the necessity of retaining the Oder-Neisse territory to give Poland the economic resources and access to the Baltic essential to a balanced economy. "It seems to me,' M. Denis said, "that they also fear, without wishing to avow it, that confronted by a rearmed Western Germany the Russians—to save the peace and as the price of a new Rapallo—might consider a deal with Germany on these territories at the expense of Poland . . . "

The Plot Thickens: Henry Wallace in a letter to *U.S. News and World Report* (Dec. 4) protests that Harold Ware (whom the Jenner committee report describes as the original organizer of the first Communist cell in the government) was never employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the AAA while Wallace was Secretary. "His service to the Department," Wallace writes, "was while Hyde was Secretary of Agriculture and Hoover was President."

Comrade Aldrich Among Them: And the labor economist, T. Balogh, in a letter to the London *New Statesman and Nation* (Nov. 28) suggests that Harry D. White's support of the drive for convertability of sterling at Bretton Woods was a Communist plot. If a desire to achieve convertability of sterling as soon as possible after the war was proof of you-know-what, the whole of Wall Street from Winthrop Aldrich down must have been Marxist.

Will the FBI Please Check Mark Twain's File Right Away? The first Marine from the Washington, D.C., area to return from captivity in Korea, describes a friend of his who elected to stay with the Communists: "He was soft-spoken and very religious. He was the kind who'd read anything he could get his hands on. But all they gave him was Communist propaganda and stuff that was always about the poor people, the Negro situation and racial discrimination. They had Howard Fast and Mark Twain."

Recommended: For the light it throws on much that is happening today and as the engrossing story of one of the bravest American journalists of our time, George Seldes's memoirs, *"Tell The Truth and Run"* (Greenberg: $3.75); for the urbane reflections and penetrating observations of a Socialist scholar in a vanishing tradition, Paul M. Sweezy's collected essays, *"The Present As History"* (Monthly Review: $5); and for sheer engrossing adventure, physical and spiritual, *"Vagrant Viking,"* the autobiography of a great Danish explorer and newspaperman, Peter Freuchen (Messner: $5).

Best Reporting of the Year: Murray Marder's coverage of the McCarthy circus at Fort Monmouth for the *Washington Post*.

Our Annual Silly Ass Award: To Rebecca West for nominating Whittaker Chambers's *Witness* as book-of-the-year "because it followed the great Anglo-Saxon tradition of illuminated dissent."

JUST LIKE PORNOGRAPHY . . .

One of our Washington news stand dealers tells us that we have a lot of "free riders" in the capital—readers who come along in the evening and in the light of the shop window next door stop and furtively read the *Weekly* on the stand, peeping through its political heresies as other readers do the disrobed girls in the "art" magazines. Unlike the haunted government employes of Washington, you need not be a political peeping tom. Keep the bare truth coming to your door by renewing your subscription on the reverse page—and send a gift sub to a friend if you can.

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Any "Subversion" In This Picture Is Brownell's

Originally the Attorney General's list of "subversive" organizations was a secret list for the guidance of administrators in adjudging "loyalty". At least it did not affect persons outside the Federal government. Under Tom Clark, the list was made public and began to cast a shadow on basic rights of association and assembly. A broader purpose is avowed in Attorney General Brownell's complaint against the National Lawyers Guild. Listing, it is there stated, "makes it possible for uninformed loyal citizens to disassociate themselves from such groups at the earliest possible moment."

Thus this becomes a means of breaking up organizations by government blacklist. The listing derives from an executive order, not a statute, and the standard—"subversive"—is undefined, if not undefinable. Only one thing is clear. The standard has to do with ideas alone. The National Lawyers Guild complains in the application for an injunction, rejected here last week by Federal Judge Keech, "there is no suggestion anywhere that plaintiff at any time participated in any illegal action or even in the advocacy of any prohibited doctrine."

The determination, until now, has been made without notice or hearing. As a result of the Supreme Court's decision in the *Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Case* (341 U.S. 123) it became clear that such procedure would be regarded as of dubious legality. But the National Lawyers Guild case shows that any change since has been of form alone. As pointed out in the *Weekly* at the time (see No. 31, September 5), the Attorney General first announced an unfavorable verdict against the Guild (in a speech to the rival American Bar Association) and *then* gave it notice and a chance to ask for a hearing.

An examination of the new Brownell regulation will show how inadequate is the notice and hearing provided. The organization must file notice within ten days or be held to have acquiesced in the designation as subversive. Within sixty days after an appeal, the Attorney General supplies "a statement of the grounds" and "written interrogatories."

The hearing procedure is peculiar. The hearing board or officer may decide to conduct it without taking any evidence, relying instead on the written interrogatories. The Attorney General, on the other hand, *may introduce evidence* "at his election." "The ordinary rules of evidence need not be adhered to" and the Attorney General may submit his evidence "in summary form or otherwise, without requiring disclosure of classified security information or the identity of confidential informants." If witnesses are heard, they "shall be subject to cross-examination, provided that no witness on behalf of the government shall be required to disclose classified security information or the identity of confidential informants."

The interrogatories submitted to the Guild show how hazardous is the path to this Star Chamber style court. Sixty-sixty interrogatories were sent the Guild, some so voluminous and covering events so far back that it is difficult to see how they could be answered in the 60-day limit set by the Attorney General's order. Interrogatory No. 50 asks (a) whether the Guild knows or has any reason to believe "that any of the present or past members of any branch, local, club or chapter of the NLG is now or ever has been" a Communist and (b) if so, to identify them. No. 50 asks whether any branch ever provided information to any Communist publication. Appended to the interrogatories is a notice that any false reply is punishable by $10,000 fine or five years in jail or both.

The interrogatories vividly illustrate the dangers to radical and non-conformist opinion. Has the Guild opposed universal military training since 1948? Why didn't the Guild support the UN action against North Korea until two and a half months after the war broke out? What position did the Guild take on the Mindszenty case? On expropriation of oil in Mexico? On admission of Red China to the United Nations? On atomic energy control, the FBI, the Smith Act and the non-Communist oath requirement of the Taft-Hartley Act? What has been its position on legalized wire-tapping? On the McCarran bill to compel testimony by granting immunity to witnesses before Congressional committees?

The Guild is appealing in its fight to enjoin the Attorney General. Can any lawyer fail to see how subversive of fair procedure and constitutional liberty is the conduct of the Attorney General? The measure of support mustered by the Guild will be the measure of the extent to which the bar has already been cowed by him.

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